



*X-Plain™*

## *Varicose Vein - Sclerotherapy*

### **Reference Summary**

Varicose veins are very common. Varicose veins can be painful and unattractive. Doctors may recommend sclerotherapy for people who have varicose veins.

If your doctor recommends surgery, the decision whether or not to have surgery is also yours. This patient education program will help you understand the benefits and risks of this type of varicose vein surgery.

#### **Anatomy**

The heart pumps blood full of oxygen into a large artery known as the aorta. The aorta divides into two main arteries in the abdomen called iliac arteries.

The iliac arteries then divide into the femoral arteries. Each femoral artery branches into smaller arteries.

After the oxygen has been delivered to the tissues of the leg, the blood returns to the heart through small veins that join together to form bigger veins. The muscles of the legs help pump the blood back to the heart through these veins.



Specialized valves allow the blood to flow upward and prevent it from flowing backward toward the feet.

#### **Symptoms And Their Causes**

When the valves in the veins of the legs fail to work properly, blood pools in the veins. This causes the veins to swell and look like ropes.

If blood clots in these veins, the veins may become very painful and feel very hard. This is known as “superficial phlebitis.”

Smaller veins arranged in spider web fashion may also appear. These are known as “spider veins.”

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Weak vein valves can occur in people who stand for long periods of times. Weak vein valves are also thought to run in families. Heredity or family history may be important in the development of varicose veins.

## Preventive Measures

Measures that help the blood flow toward the heart can be very helpful in preventing or improving varicose veins. These include elevating the legs while resting and wearing elastic stockings. Exercising may also help.

If none of these measures helps alleviate the symptoms, surgery may be recommended.



## Surgical Treatment

Spider veins are usually treated by an injection of special chemicals, which seal off the veins. This procedure is known as “sclerotherapy.” It can be completed in your surgeon’s office.

This procedure is usually done while you are awake. There is very little pain or discomfort.

Afterwards, elastic bandages are placed to try to reduce possible bruising and bleeding.

## Risks And Complications

This procedure is very safe. There are, however, several possible risks and complications, which are unlikely but possible. You need to know about them just in case they happen. By being informed, you may be able to help your doctor detect complications early.

Bruising, bleeding, and pain in the area of the injection are not unusual. Wearing elastic bandages should help reduce these symptoms.



Infections at the site of the injections are very rare. There is a slight possibility that the varicose and spider veins may recur.

Brownish spots may also occur at the site of the injections. This is not common. Adverse reactions to the injected chemicals may cause larger veins to clot.

## After The Surgery

Your doctor will recommend that you elevate your legs while resting. You will be asked to wear elastic stockings to decrease the bruising and the recurrence of the varicose veins.

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Exercise will also help reduce the recurrence of the symptoms.

## **Summary**

Sclerotherapy is very safe and produces good symptomatic and cosmetic results. However, complications may happen.

Knowing about them will help you detect them early if they happen.